

USAR_J-9_Umeko_Iwase

08:52:51:06 Thank you for coming today.

08:52:54:04 Thank you.

08:52:57:14 Please tell us your name.

08:52:59:06 My name is Umeko Iwase.

08:53:07:05 Please tell us your date of birth and where did you grow up.

08:53:10:21 I was born in January 2nd, Taisho 11th(1922). I was born in Ogano-cho, Chichibu county, Saitama. I lived there until 3rd grade. And I moved to Higashi-matsuyama in Saitama, and I moved to Ogawa in Saitama for Jyo-gakkou(girls' school). The name of the school is Ogawa Jyo-gakkou. After the graduation, I moved to Urawa in Saitama because of father's business transfer.

08:53:54:16 What kind of job did you have before the war?

08:53:59:10 I was working before the war. No, that doesn't make sense... I got married and my husband had been sent to the front and I found out that I had a baby. The baby was born in Showa 18th(1943).

08:54:32:10 What kind of job did you have before the war?

08:54:34:14 Oh, before the war. I was a clerk. I was a sales lady before.

08:54:43:11 You were sales lady at first?

08:54:44:16 Yes, I was sales lady at Takashimaya store.

08:55:00:00 What did you do for fun when you go out town before the war started.

08:55:10:10 After the work, Ginza is on the way home, so I often went to Ginza. They had street stalls on Ginza street. I walked home.

08:55:38:13 Did you watch any movies before the attack on Pearl Harbor?

08:55:45:03 Umm... what do you call it...

08:55:57:18 I forgot them...

08:56:00:04 It was viewed at the Nihon-gekijyo and the Sho-chiku Movie theater in front of the Kabukiza Theater. I forgot the title of the movie.

08:56:10:14 What kind of movie was it?

08:56:13:06 It was romance. Oh, the title was "Aisen-katsura." I've watched "Aisen-katsura" several times.

08:56:24:07 Did you see any American movies?
08:56:26:10 I've seen them, but I don't remember the title.
08:56:32:23 "Peperonko"... isn't that American movie?
08:56:41:21 I guess not... I think I've seen American movie, but I don't remember the title.

08:56:49:07 How do you know it was American movie? What kind of story was it? Was it western movie?
08:56:59:08 It was romance.

08:57:16:18 Tell us what was it like dating or hanging out with other friends before the war.
08:57:38:14 After the Pearl Harbor attack, we believed that Japan would win. We thought that Japan would never lose because Japan was kingdom of god.

08:58:00:10 What did you do with your friends at town for fun?
Mostly movies?
08:58:07:19 We went to cafe, movies. We didn't have a car, so we walked Showa Street. We've even walked to Asakusa.
08:58:24:02 We've been to Toshimaen.

08:58:28:11 I've heard that you had to walk far from men?
08:58:32:11 Yes, yes, that's right,

08:58:34:04 Can you tell us about that?
08:58:37:02 I was walking on Showa Street with my boyfriend, father of my elder son. I had to walk 1meter(3ft) behind him. The police admonished me to stay back. We both got interrogated by different officers. They asked us if we were married.

08:59:16:22 Did you say older brother?
08:59:18:06 No, I was with my boyfriend.

08:59:28:06 Where were you when you heard about the attack on Pearl Harbor?
08:59:33:04 I was at... What year was it?

08:59:39:04 It was in December of Showa 16th.
08:59:40:08 Ok, 16th...

08:59:79:05 Please tell us about when you first heard about the attack on Pearl Harbor.
09:00:02:22 The first time I heard about it...

09:00:08:11 Who told you about the attack?

09:00:10:10 I think I heard it on the news or on the radio.

09:00:16:18 Was it Chugai news paper?

09:00:18:20 That's right. A journalist from Chugai news paper came and told one of my friend what had happened. I was surprised to hear about it, but I truly believed that Japan would win so I didn't worry about it. I only thought about winning.

09:01:06:13 Did you have any friends or relatives who directly participated in the attack on Pearl Harbor?

09:01:13:22 No.

09:01:29:00 How did the life change after the attack on Pearl Harbor?

09:01:36:19 Our house got burnt and we were penniless. I evacuated to rural area with my child, so my mother came to see us to Yorii, Saitama. When she came, she got pierced by bomb fragment through her arm and stopped right in front of her heart. She was in hospital for 8 months since we didn't have house. A person from a town office told us that we don't have to pay for the expense during the war time. But the war ended before a complete recovery.

09:02:50:12 When the war started, was there any shortage of clothes and food? How did they change?

09:03:03:02 We had to have a special ticket to purchase clothes. And we could only withdraw 100 yen from our bank.

09:03:20:02 I think it was 100 yen. I forgot many of my past memories.

09:03:42:10 How did the shortage of food affected you?

09:03:44:17 When I evacuated to rural region, I took valuable formal crested kimono with me and exchanged that with rice. We were wearing monpe pants, so we needed cotton but all of the cotton were burnt.

09:04:11:21 When did your house got burned out?

09:04:16:22 It was Showa 19th.

09:04:24:14 Is that one year before the end of the war?

09:04:26:22 Yes, my house got burned out that year. I think it was on March 11th.

09:04:42:11 So on March 11th, one year before the end of the war, your house got burned out and all of the clothes were burned out.

09:04:49:03 That is right. We've lost everything. Only things I

evacuated were formal crested kimono and nice clothes with very soft material.

09:04:59:05 How was the shortage of clothes and food like before your house got burned out?

09:05:10:01 We did have shortage. I evacuated to relative's farm in rural region.

09:05:22:20 I barely had something to eat.

09:05:33:18 When did you evacuate, and where to?

09:05:38:18 The house got burned out before his birthday, so...

09:05:49:09 I evacuated from Showa 19th to rural region in Saitama. Few days after the evacuation, my mother came to see me and got hit by bomb fragment and hospitalized.

09:06:09:18 I stayed at hospital while taking care of mother because house was burned out.

09:06:17:20 The war ended when I was at the hospital.

09:06:21:05 So it happened after the birthday?

09:06:25:19 Yes, he was born in Showa 18th. The house was burned out in Showa 19th, before his birthday.

09:06:32:22 Was it March 11th?

09:06:34:03 Yes.

09:06:35:02 So you went to rural region because your house got burned out?

09:06:40:00 Yes.

09:06:40:15 So you evacuated.

09:06:41:05 Yes.

09:06:44:23 When was it when you were in Ogano?

09:06:46:07 I was in Ogano for short period of time. I went to Ogano and my mother came to see me 10 days later and got hit by bomb fragment at Yorii Station. I had nowhere to stay, so I stayed at hospital where my mother was. And I raised my son, Masaaki.

09:07:02:04 So you went from Ogano to Yorii?

09:07:05:14 Yes, that's right.

09:07:07:14 Yorii was a scary place so I went to Yoshida, which is where my mother's home was.

09:07:19:22 How did you feel when the house got burned out on March 11th?

09:07:26:14 My mother, my son, and I were in an air-raid shelter. My

father believed that Urawa wouldn't get burnt so he was in bed. The incendiary bomb was dropped and the fence was on fire. It was very bright and I was so surprised to see bright light at night.

09:07:55:04 When I saw my father next day, he was wearing tanzen jacket and rampaged around with disturbance. It was shameful. He didn't think his house would get burned out.

09:08:07:18 We stayed at friend's house after that incident.

09:08:24:13 What happened to your husband during the war?

09:08:29:22 He died at the war. He couldn't see his son.

09:08:49:08 Where did he died?

09:08:51:10 Philippine.

09:08:56:00 When was it?

09:08:59:12 It was Showa 19th, March 11th.

09:09:22:11 Back then, people were not well informed about the atomic bomb. When did you first got information about the atomic bomb?

09:09:34:16 I don't remember.

09:09:38:23 It wasn't right after the attack?

09:09:40:07 No, it wasn't right after the attack because the radio was burnt, we could barely listen to news. Newspapers were burned out as well.

09:09:58:11 When did you hear about it? Maybe a year later?

09:10:06:01 No, less then that. I heard it from someone.

09:10:13:21 Maybe few months later?

09:10:15:02 I think so...

09:10:15:21 What did you think about it?

09:10:19:02 I was surprised about the fact that there was such a bomb like that.

09:10:28:14 I didn't understand them well.

09:10:43:14 How did you feel when Japan surrendered to US?

09:10:50:16 I was relieved. I was glad that the war had ended. I truly felt that.

09:11:10:15 Can you tell us about what was it like when you learned alphabet at school?

09:11:21:10 Alphabet... like ABC?

09:11:23:07 Yes. English.

09:11:26:06 Yes, I learned things like "Good morning sir."

09:11:30:00 When did you learn them?

09:11:31:02 I learned them when I was in Jyo-gakkou(girls' school), but we could no longer use them in two years.

09:11:39:21 How did you learn English?

09:11:43:14 What do you mean?

09:11:44:17 Did you learn from Japanese teacher?

09:11:47:18 Yes, it was Japanese teacher. She was a beautiful woman.

09:11:51:00 So the teacher was a woman.

09:11:51:22 Yes. She taught us English. However, students could no longer study English 2 years later.

09:11:59:07 How did you think about English?

09:12:02:20 I think it was ok...

09:12:06:14 Did you think like "I didn't know such language existed..."?

09:12:08:15 Yes, yes, I thought about it.

09:12:24:18 Did you know anything about America before the war?

09:12:35:03 About America? I knew that they have a big land. I didn't really know about them.

09:16:06:16 Can you wait and stay quiet for 60 seconds?

09:16:08:04 Ok...

09:13:06:10 This would be the last question. From your experience, how do you think about the war?Can you share us your thoughts about the war from your experience?

09:13:25:10 I can't think of anything that is more awful than a war.

09:13:33:10 I really think that. I was in Urawa, and from there, I could see the B-29 shooting bombs. I could even hear the sound of B-29 when they came. I could hear them from far away, so I was so scared that they were getting closer. I was relieved when I heard the war had ended and I was glad that I don't have to hear the scary airplane sound again. I don't want to experience war again.

09:14:26:22 I just hope to live peacefully for rest of my life.

09:14:43:15 Do you have any thoughts about the attack on Pearl Harbor?

09:14:46:20 I don't remember about it.

09:14:48:07 Any thoughts or impression about it?

09:14:57:03 Japan had fought to the last man in the attack on Pearl Harbor, didn't it?

09:15:04:12 It was the beginning of the war. The war began when Japan had made air-raid attack on Hawaii. Do you have any thoughts about it?

09:15:18:21 I was too busy to secure something to eat, and I didn't have time to take care of other stuff. I was like 'whatever will be, will be.' Nothing could be helped. I thought that was my destiny.

09:15:45:04 Sorry, I couldn't explain it well.

09:15:49:06 Thank you very much

09:12:47:19 I didn't have any relatives who went to America, so I didn't really know about America. I wasn't interested to know them either.